

**Fairfax County History Commission
Monthly Meeting**

June 3, 2026, 7:00 p.m.
Fairfax County Government Center
Conference Room 9/10
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

The Fairfax County History Commission conducted an in-person meeting on June 3, 2026.
The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Call to Order and Attendance

Commissioners Present per Districts:	District:
Subhi Mehdi, <i>Chair</i>	Dranesville
Sue Kovach Shuman, <i>Treasurer</i>	Providence
Jen Macpherson, <i>Secretary</i>	Franconia
Anne Barnes	Mount Vernon
Anne Stuntz	Hunter Mill
Brian Heintz	Braddock
Carmen Powell	Hunter Mill
Cheryl-Ann Repetti	Sully
David Meyer	Fairfax City
Holly Irwin	Mount Vernon
Jordan Tannenbaum	Springfield
Margo Coleman	Mason
Todi Carnes	Franconia

Commissioners Excused:

Gretchen Bulova, Braddock
Tammy Mannarino, Mount Vernon

Commissioners Absent:

Michelle Acari Rose, Dranesville

County Liaisons Present:

Stephanie Newman, Heritage Resources Branch, Department of Planning and Development.
Christopher Barbuschak, Virginia Room, Fairfax County Public Library.
Aimee Wells, Archaeology and Collections Branch, Fairfax County Park Authority.

Staff Present:

Barsha Parajuli, History Commission Clerk

Special Guests:

DB Combs, FCPS

Anthony Vitucci, FCPS

Vincent Turner II, EHT Traceries

F. Thomas Lee, Samaha Associates

Presentations

Dunn Loring Redevelopment Final Presentation (Samaha and EHT Traceries Consultants)

- DB Combs reviewed turnout and updates from Dunn Loring Heritage Day. Approximately 40 people attended the event. He noted that a significant outcome of the event was the receipt of a 1976 yearbook. He also reviewed project development partners.
- Kyle Lee reviewed the project timeline, with construction expected to begin in the summer. He noted the building must meet FCPS educational specifications and was designed within current building service standards. The limited footprint maximizes site circulation and preserves green space. He also discussed the proposed geothermal well field and other sustainable energy features. s.
- The consultants presented the existing and proposed site plans. They noted that the proposed building had been stepped back significantly from Gallows Road. Changes to the site included the closure of one site entrance, additional tree preservation, and the construction of a retaining wall. The main site entrance would be maintained.
- The team reviewed plans for the interpretive historical exhibit, which would incorporate salvaged elements including the pediment, entranceway, broken pilasters, doorways, main entrance, existing brick, and the Federal Works Agency plaque. Two displays were proposed — one interior, one exterior. The building design adds a floor above and to the left of the preserved entranceway.
- The consultants reported that comments had been received from both the Architectural Review Board and the History Commission, and that the wording of the interpretive display had been revised can be condensed accordingly. Architectural style information on the plaque had been condensed. They also reviewed the proposed location of the interpretive wayside marker.
- Commissioner Stuntz stated that she had received feedback suggesting the exterior wayside marker might be better located near the buses to increase foot traffic. However, she also liked the current location because the surrounding green space would help the marker stand out and elevate its importance.
- Commissioner Tannenbaum asked about historical artifacts that would be included in the exhibit. The consultants stated that the only artifact currently available was the 1976 yearbook received during Heritage Day.

- Commissioner Stuntz asked how future historical artifacts might be incorporated into the exhibit and suggested the possible inclusion of display cases.
- Commissioner Kovach Shuman stated that she had collected phone numbers from several alumni who recalled Field Day activities involving horses and goats and noted they may have photos that could be included in the signage or surrounding exhibit space. She suggested the space could also include additional display cases for historical artifacts near the wayside markers.
- Commissioner Powell asked about the African American family who sold the land to FCPS. The project team reaffirmed that the family was highlighted on the exterior interpretive marker.
- Commissioner Kovach Shuman stated that the signage should address the school's desegregation. She noted Commissioner Meyers' recollection that Desegregation Day was celebrated in 1964, which he confirmed as the first Tuesday after Labor Day that year. Commissioner Stuntz noted that School Board minutes indicated desegregation occurred during the 1965–1966 school year, a point Commissioner Powell confirmed. Commissioner Meyers maintained, however, that based on his personal experience as a student, the school had in practice been desegregated in 1964.
- The consultants noted that QR codes had been added to the displays to direct visitors to additional information on the project website.
- Commissioner Stuntz asked about the information on the markers, including the people who were involved in creating and finalizing the architectural designs submitted to the Federal Works Agency. She also asked about footnotes and source credits for the information on the markers could be included, noting that such information could be important for historic preservation research and review, referring to the prior conversation about the dates of desegregation.
- Commissioner Stuntz discussed the proffer requirement for ethnographic community outreach and asked whether the team has received more information from the Vienna First Baptist community or additional information obtained regarding descendants of the family that previously owned the property.
- Commissioner Stuntz also asked about making the information more accessible to students — whether through a lower-height marker, an additional display, or interactive elements — emphasizing that the method could be flexible, but that student accessibility was of utmost importance. The development team noted that yearbook photos were included in part because younger students would likely connect more with the material seeing peers their own age represented in the exhibit.
- Commissioner Stuntz stated that she appreciated receiving a response letter addressing each concern raised by the History Commission, but she wished to follow up on several issues that had only been "acknowledged" rather than fully addressed.

- Commissioner Macpherson asked whether an archaeological survey of cultural resources had been conducted for the site, and the development team responded that an archeological survey had not been conducted for the site.
- Commissioner Kovach Shuman noted that she had recordings from alumni collected during Heritage Day and asked how those recordings might be incorporated into the project website.
- Chair Mehdi asked about the next steps in the review process. Newman stated that responses were due to Laura Kviklys by June 26.
- Chair Mehdi also asked how commissioners should submit comments to the project team. She further questioned the purpose of providing feedback if the presentation represented the final design and sought clarification on whether additional feedback could still be provided.
- Commissioner Meyer asked about the permanence and flexibility of the design, particularly whether future users of the space would be able to adapt to the presentation area for purposes other than those originally intended.
- The response letter to the History Commission comments can be found as **Attachment 1**
- The proposed exterior and interior interpretive panel can be found as **Attachment 2**

Overview of Section 106 (Jordan Tannenbaum)

- Commissioner Tannenbaum gave context for his involvement with the Section 106 committee and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), noting he was appointed under the Obama administration, reappointed under Biden, and then given an ultimatum to resign or be fired under the second Trump administration.
- He reviewed key federal legislation protecting historic sites:
 - The Antiquities Act of 1906 – established several processes, including the designation of historic monuments by presidential proclamation, often done at the end of a president's term.
 - Historic Sites Act of 1935 – created the National Historic Landmark program for nationally significant properties and established the Historic American Buildings Survey for architectural documentation.
 - 1950s development pressures – suburban expansion, the interstate highway system, dams/reservoirs, and HUD's creation increased the risk of demolition and neglect, prompting further protections.
 - The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 – passed in response to rapid redevelopment created by the ACHP and the Section 106 process. Its key significance was extending protection to local and state landmarks, not just national ones.
 - The ACHP's mission is to preserve historic properties and ensure the Section 106 process is properly followed. "Historic properties" refers to sites listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places.

- Section 106 applies to all federal permitting, licensing, leasing, and development agencies, which must determine whether their undertaking could affect a historic property and give the ACHP an opportunity to comment; the process is triggered by the federal agency.
- Chair Mehdi asked if such cases were decided in federal court. Commissioner Tannenbaum confirmed they are, since historic sites are protected under federal law.
- The Section 106 Process involves four steps: establishing the undertaking and identifying consulting parties; identifying historic properties and the Area of Potential Effects; determining whether the undertaking has no effect, no adverse effect, or an adverse effect; and, if adverse effects are found, resolving them through consultation, with the ACHP able to offer advisory (non-binding) comments if no agreement is reached. Commissioner Meyer asked whether citizen groups could use ACHP comments to strengthen litigation. Commissioner Tannenbaum said the comments carry little weight in court; plaintiffs must instead show the agency failed to follow a required procedural step.
- Chair Mehdi asked whether the current administration followed Section 106 for work on the Reflecting Pool. Commissioner Tannenbaum said it had not, and the National Trust has sued on those grounds; he noted the East Room renovations were not subject to similar litigation since the White House is exempt from Section 106.
- Chair Mehdi asked whether the National Park Service (which owns the Reflecting Pool) could have initiated the Section 106 process. Commissioner Tannenbaum confirmed it could have but didn't, leaving it open to litigation; he was unsure if the Pool is listed on or eligible for the National Register.
- Commissioner Meyer asked about using delays as a preservation strategy, noting the cost risk. Commissioner Tannenbaum confirmed delays do occur and can give preservation groups and the public time to engage developers on adverse effects.
- Commissioner Carnes asked if states/counties have an analogous process. Commissioner Tannenbaum said he wasn't sure all states do, but some have comparable review processes.
- Commissioner Meyer asked about NEPA non-compliance cases. Commissioner Tannenbaum explained that NEPA is a broader environmental statute compatible with Section 106, and litigation can proceed under both.
- Chair Mehdi thanked Tannenbaum and expressed interest in amending Commission bylaws to require a preservation lawyer as a member.

Minutes

Secretary Jen Macpherson moved, and Commissioner Barnes seconded, that the History Commission accepts May 6, 2026, minutes, with minor changes from Commissioner Irwin, and pays the Clerk, Barsha Parajuli.

The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Kovach Shuman reviewed the Treasurer's report for the period ending April 30, 2026. The Treasurer's Report can be found as **Attachment 3**

- Commissioner Kovach Shuman shared that there were expenditures for the minute taker fees, FICA, and Medicare.
- She noted that out of the \$11,000 that was allocated for the History Conference, \$4,778.32 was spent in total. She stated that she has money with the Park Authority that is needed to be transferred back to the County fund for the History Commission.
- She encouraged a young historians' program to be implemented by the Commission
- The ending balance is \$49,475.45

Staff Reports

Planning and Development (Stephanie Newman)

- Newman asked for a vote on the All Virtual and Remote Participation policies.

Commissioner Macpherson moved, and Commissioner Meyer seconded that the History Commission approve the All-Virtual Meeting Policy and the Policy for Remote Participation of Members for FY2027.

The motion passes unanimously.

- Chair Mehdi confirmed with Newman that the vote on the policy applied to Fiscal Year 2027.
- Chair Mehdi noted that while Newman was on leave that Denicee Dressel would backstop her.
- The full Planning and Development staff report can be found as **Attachment 4**

Fairfax County Park Authority, Archaeology and Collections (Aimee Wells)

- Wells reported that the Fairfax County Park Authority is seeking funding for a new collections facility through the Save America's Treasures program and the National Park Service. She requested a timely letter of support from the History Commission, noting that the grant application was due June 15 and that the Commission's support would be greatly appreciated. Commissioner Kovach Shuman asked whether the application would be submitted under the Fiscal Year 2026 Save America's Treasures

program and clarified whether the fiscal year needed to be specified in the motion. Wells confirmed that the fiscal year designation was not necessary.

- Commissioner Meyer asked whether the proposed facility would be a county facility. Wells responded that it would be a Fairfax County Park Authority collections facility. Meyer also inquired about the funding shortfall. Wells explained that the project was a revival of an earlier effort and that approximately \$16 million had been secured. She noted that the project had previously been estimated at approximately \$21 million but was uncertain of the current total cost.
- Commissioner Repetti stated that when she previously served as Chair, the Commission had sent a letter of support to the Park Authority when the project was under consideration for bond funding. She noted that there had been strong support for the use of bond funds for the facility.
- Commissioner Carnes expressed support for the funding request and additionally requested two items: a status update on current collections facilities and briefings or updates on new or renovated facilities, as previously requested. Ms. Wells confirmed that internal discussions had taken place regarding providing this information but noted that she was not aware that a formal response had not yet been delivered.
- Chair Mehdi stated that Commissioner Carnes would be responsible for drafting a letter on behalf of the History Commission in support of the Park Authority's request for funding for the new collections facility.

Commissioner Kovach Shuman moved, and Commissioner Macpherson as well as Commissioner Irwin seconded, that the History Commission write a letter of support for the Fairfax County Park Authority application being submitted to the National Park Service for a Historic Preservation Fund - Semiquincentennial Grant. Commissioner Carnes will take the lead in composing the letter on behalf of the History Commission in accordance with the Letter Writing Policy, and the letter is to be delivered by June 10

Discussion on the motion included Chair Mehdi asked whether the June 15 deadline for the letter of support was feasible. Wells clarified that June 15 was the grant proposal deadline and requested the letter by June 10. The motion was amended accordingly.

[This request was later withdrawn by Aimee Wells via email because FCPA decided to delay the grant application by a year.]

- The full Archeology and Collections report can be found as **Attachment 5** Fairfax County Public Libraries, Virginia Room (Chris Barbuschak)
- No oral updates were reported.

- The full Virginia Room Staff report can be found as **Attachment 6**

Committee Reports

Advocacy (Anne Stuntz)

- Commissioner Stuntz requested availability of Commissioners who could participate in outreach tables for the upcoming event.
- Chair Mehdi stated that moving forward, the Advocacy Committee would be designated to handle all issues regarding the Dunn Loring project with Commissioner Kovach Shuman taking lead.

Commissioner Macpherson moved, and Commissioner Repetti seconded, that the History Commission designate the Advocacy Committee to handle all matters related to Dunn Loring Elementary School under the leadership of Commissioner Kovach Shuman.

Motion passes unanimously.

Discussion on the motion included Chair Mehdi's note that project comments were due by June 26, Commissioner Stuntz's recommendation to submit comments earlier to allow time for discussion or revisions, and Commissioner Repetti's question about how input from other Commissioners would be gathered.

Commissioner Macpherson moved, Commissioner Powell seconded, that the History Commission designate the Advocacy Committee to write a letter in response to FCPS on the final presentation of the Dunn Loring interpretive panels, presented tonight on June 3, 2026, under the leadership of Commissioner Stuntz and in accordance with the Letter Writing Policy. The letter will be transmitted by June 15, 2026.

Discussion on the motion included Chair Mehdi's note that project comments were due by June 26, Commissioner Stuntz's recommendation to submit comments earlier to allow time for discussion or revisions, and Commissioner Repetti's question about how input from other Commissioners would be managed.

Motion passes unanimously.

- The full Advocacy Meeting minutes can be found as **Attachment 7**.

Conference (Sue Kovach Shuman)

- Commissioner Carnes noted that while several commissioners assisted with the event, planning support had been limited, and much of the organizational responsibility fell primarily on Commissioner Kovach Shuman

- Chair Mehdi agreed that future planning should be structured differently to avoid placing the majority of the workload on a single individual.
- Chair Mehdi asked Commissioner Heintz whether there had been progress on establishing a student representative position on the History Commission. Commissioner Heintz responded that engaging high school students would likely remain challenging.
- Commissioner Repetti suggested that focusing on college-aged students rather than high school students might be more effective in identifying individuals with sustained interest and professional potential in history-related fields.
- Commissioner Kovach Shuman provided context regarding History Day and its structure. She suggested the possibility of introducing an additional award for History Day winners to engage and reach a younger audience.
- Commissioner Irwin proposed incorporating field trips or off-site programming, suggesting that instead of hosting a single centralized conference, students could be engaged through visits to historical sites.
- Commissioner Kovach Shuman also suggested incorporating more interactive activities, such as having participants analyze photographs through archival research or engage directly with historical artifacts.
- Chair Mehdi asked whether the Awards Committee could develop a timeline and proposal for incorporating a student representative role and emphasized the need to prioritize this initiative. Commissioner Meyer expressed his wish to withdraw as chair of the Awards Committee.
- Commissioner Tannenbaum expressed support for Commissioner Irwin's suggestion of field trips and engaging students through visits to historical sites.
- Commissioner Kovach Shuman shared posters that she had in her possession and offered them to be utilized at outreach tables at upcoming events.
- The full Conference committee report can be found as **Attachment 8**

Financial Review (Cheryl-Ann Repetti)

- No oral updates were reported.
- History Commission and DPD Finance Meeting Minutes can be found as **Attachment 9**

Inventory (Tammy Mannarino)

- No oral updates were reported.

Markers (Cheryl-Ann Repetti)

- Commissioner Repetti reported that three historical markers had been ordered: First Church of Merrifield, Dolly Madison Flight from Washington (McLean), and Spring Bank Colored School.
- The Dolly Madison marker was set to be unveiled July 4, but Commissioner Repetti noted that production turnaround—originally estimated at 6–7 weeks—has since stretched to as much as 6–7 months, putting project timelines at risk.

- To address these delays, Commissioner Repetti proposed providing organizations with high-quality mock-up markers for unveiling at planned ceremonies while the permanent markers are still in production

Commissioner Repetti moved, and Commissioner Heintz seconded, that the History Commission allow for up to \$1000 to spend on production of appropriate mockup markers for First Baptist Church of Merrifield, Dolley Madison Flight from Washington in McLean, and Spring Bank Colored School.

Discussion on the motion included Commissioner Repetti's suggestion that the mock markers be preserved after the permanent markers are installed and Commissioner Stuntz's request for clarification on whether the motion included installation, with Commissioner Repetti noting that available funds could potentially cover installation and suggesting freestanding markers instead of ground-mounted ones.

Motion passes unanimously.

Oral History (Sue Kovach Shuman)

- No oral updates were reported.
- The full Oral History committee report can be found as **Attachment 10**

250th Anniversary (Chris Barbuschack)

- In lieu of Vice Chair Mannarino's absence, Barbuschack provided relevant updates from the 250th Commission. He shared upcoming 250th related events which included:
 - A George Washington exhibit at Mount Vernon on June 11
 - Sails on the Potomac Event on June 12
 - Fairfax County Brew Fest at Bunnyman on June 13
 - The annual Reading Day festival which will also be happening on June 13
 - Colonial Day at the City of Fairfax Library on June 20
 - Lake Fairfax Independence Day with Drone Show on June 27
- He stated that the commission has provided funds and promotional materials to over 60 Fairfax County Schools to enhance end of school year picnics with a 250th Theme.
- He also noted that an organization doing 250th related events could potentially be given grants by the 250th Commission and encouraged such organizations to apply.
- The full Fairfax County Semiquincentennial Commission's Semi-Annual Report is available online.

Other Reports

ARB Liaison (Cheryl-Ann Repetti)

- No oral update was reported. The ARB Commission Report can be found as **Attachment 11**

City of Fairfax (David Meyer)

- No oral updates were reported.

FCPA Liaison; Banks Site; Dranesville Tavern (Todi Carnes)

- No oral updates were reported.

African American History Inventory (Holly Irwin)

- No oral updates were reported.

News to Share

- Commissioner Irwin encouraged Commissioners to watch the City of Falls Church 250th anniversary videos.
- Commissioner Repetti encouraged Commissioners to attend the Goins marker unveiling scheduled for June 6 at the Pinn Community Center.
- Commissioner Coleman shared that, in partnership with Commissioner Kovach, she would be working on a program for residents interested in learning about the history of the areas in which they live. She also noted that she had been contacted regarding the possibility of an event dedicated to Vietnam veterans.
- Chair Mehdi, in Vice Chair Mannarino's absence, said Commissioners would receive an email from Mannarino regarding the History Commission's Annual Report, including a 250th anniversary theme and a section detailing events the Commission is sponsoring, supporting, or partnering on. She added that a section on the Commission's interface with the Fairfax County Park Authority would be authored by Commissioner Carnes, and that biographies would be moved from the annual report to the Commission's website.
- Commissioner Stuntz shared upcoming Vienna 250 events, including Juneteenth programming, Flag Day on June 14, a book talk on June 20 featuring Gayle Jessup White discussing her relationship to Sally Hemings, and Liberty Amendments Month, which would include a week of commemorations for the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 19th Amendments.
- An update provided by Commissioner Kovach Shuman on the Old Gallows Road house can be found as **Attachment 12**
- The Executive Committee Meeting minutes can be found as **Attachment 13**

Closed Session

Commissioner Macpherson moved, and Commissioner Stuntz seconded, that the Fairfax County History Commission convene a closed session pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(1) for the purpose of discussing a human resources matter. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Macpherson moved, and Commissioner Irwin seconded, the following certification:

WHEREAS, the Fairfax County History Commission has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, § 2.2-3712(D) of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this Commission that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairfax County History Commission hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting, were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting.

The motion passes unanimously.

Adjournment

Chair Mehdi closed the meeting at 9:05 p.m. at the conclusion of the agenda items.

Respectfully submitted:

Barsha Parajuli

Clerk, Fairfax County History Commission



Jen Macpherson,
Secretary of the Fairfax
County History Commission

Date: September 21, 2026

Attachments:

Attachment 1: The Samaha Associates response letter to the History Commission comments on Dunn Loring

Attachment 2: The proposed exterior and interior interpretive panel for Dunn Loring

Attachment 3: June 2026 Treasurer's Report

Attachment 4: Planning and Development Staff Report

Attachment 5: Archeology and Collections Staff Report

Attachment 6: Virginia Room Staff Report

Attachment 7: June 2026 Advocacy Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachment 8: June 2026 Conference Committee Report

Attachment 9: June 2026 History Commission and DPD Meeting Minutes

Attachment 10: June 2026 Oral History Report

Attachment 11: June 2026 ARB Commission Report

Attachment 12: June 2026 Update on the Old Gallows Road house

Attachment 13: Executive Committee Meeting Minutes